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ABSTRACT

The inconsistency in research investigations of the process of white flight is especially evident when social scientists become actors in the legal drama surrounding the desegregation of public schools. Social science "experts" for the contending litigants often present contradictory evidence. The resultant ambiguity allows judges and administrators to dismiss the utility cf social science and rely on their own intuition of the social process. It is suggested that many of the empirical ambiguities concerning the causes and magnitude of white flight stem frcm the narrow policy focus of most recent research. By failing to place the process of white flight in a general theory of urban demcgraphic change, researchers become susceptible to conclusions that enccurage a simplistic misidentification of a complex set of behaviors. Extensive reliance on aggregate measures of net change has increased the likelihood of misidentification. The advantages and shortcomings of several methods that permit a richer analysis cf trends and determinants of deviations from trends are illustrated by utilizing longitudinal and cross sectional data from American cities. A policy research agenda is suggested, in the hope that a broader perspective will be adopted in future studies of the redistribution of metropolitan population, especially with regard to the role played by desegregation actions. (Author/GC)

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THE DEMOGRAPHIC IMPACT OF SCHOOL DESEGREGATION POLICY

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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The Demographic Impact of School Desegregation Policy

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ABSTRACT

While the process of white flight has been the subject of many investigations, students of the urban theater are still without a consistent repertoire. This inconsistency is especially evident when social scientists become actors in the legal drama surrounding the desegregation of public schools. Social science "experts" for the contending litigants often present contradictory evidence. The resultant ambiguity allows judges and administrators to dismiss the utility of social science and rely on their own intuition of social process.

We suggest that many of the empirical ambiguities concerning the causes and magnitude of white flight stem from the narrow policy focus of most recent research. By failing to place the process of white flight in a general theory of urban demographic change, researchers become susceptible to conclusions that encourage a simplistic misidentification of a complex set of behaviors. Extensive reliance on aggregate measures of net change has increased the likelihood of misidentification. Utilizing longitudinal and cross-sectional data, we illustrate the advantages and shortcomings of several methods that permit a richer analysis of trends and determinants of deviations from trends. Finally, we offer a policy research agenda in the hope that a broader perspective will be adopted in future studies of the redistribution of metropolitan population, especially with regard to the role played by desegregation actions.

The Demographic Impact of School Desegregation Policy

In a courtroom in Dallas in March, 1976, a federal judge heard testimony from sociologists retained by each party in a remedy hearing on school desegregation.[1] The expert witness for the school district presented an analysis showing that full desegregation with extensive busing would spur rapid and sustained white flight, quickly turning the public schools into a system serving primarily black and Mexican American children. The school district proposed a limited desegregation plan that it claimed would avoid excessive white flight and thus permit the maximum feasible amount of desegregation. The plaintiffs opposed a plan that preserved a substantial amount of uniracial schooling. Their expert took issue with the unpublished and incomplete analysis of the other expert, and presented unpublished and incomplete evidence that showed no consistent relation between desegregation and white flight. The judge reached his decision only a few days after the conclusion of hearings.[2] He expressed dismay at his inability to resolve "the battle of the sociological experts." But he accepted a limited plan that had as one of its perceived virtues the avoidance of massive white flight.

Social science research on white flight is becoming a growth industry, but it has yet to return significant policy dividends. The judge was right to express bewilderment. Despite the recent flurry of studies, there is as yet little scholarly consensus.[3] The news media have publicized particular experts who are willing to express policy conclusions, and protagonists have seized upon those scholars willing to present evidence in judicial or legislative hearings. Presentation of evidence in scholarly publications

is increasing, but cumulation of trustworthy evidence occurs at a glacial pace. Our purpose here is to indicate certain complexities in the study of white flight that make it extraordinarily difficult to analyze, and to suggest some data sources and modes of analysis that should prove helpful.

The redistribution of metropolitan population has long been affected by a variety of governmental actions, among which central city school desegregation actions are a recent addition. The call for a coherent national policy on population distribution is a recurring one in the United States (and many other nations), but the United States has been no more successful at developing a distribution policy than it has been at developing a comprehensive population growth policy or an integrated national urban policy. Massive suburbanization of the white population is a fundamental feature of twentieth-century social change. It has been spurred by numerous governmental actions, often in ways not fully anticipated. At the federal level, public housing, slum clearance, highway construction, urban renewal, transformation of residential mortgage markets, public assistance regulations, facility location, and other programs, together with pervasive racial discrimination in the conduct of each, all contributed to shaping the current urban crisis and its racial dimensions. State and local governmental actions similarly contributed. Inactions at each level of government in the regulation of private racial discrimination (redlining, restrictive covenants, etc.) may also be cited.

Interest in school desegregation as a possible contributing cause of the suburbanization of white families has not developed out of a broad concern for a coherent distribution policy, but springs rather

from political maneuvering over school desegregation policy. The narrow policy framework within which questions about white flight have been posed is one explanation for the narrowness of the social science research on this topic. We believe a broader perspective is both feasible and more enlightening.

Varieties of White Flight

In its decision mandating implementation of school desegregation with "all deliberate speed," the Supreme Court ruled that "the vitality of these constitutional principles cannot be allowed to yield simply because of disagreement with them."[4] The Court did not then recognize the ingenuity that would be displayed in devising ways to inhibit application of these principles. In the 1960s and early 1970s the Court struck down one after another technique of delay and evasion. As public school systems increasingly desegregated their formal operations, avoidance of central city public schools became one of the most effective techniques by which individual white families could evade "unyielding" constitutional principles.

The immediate objective of most school desegregation programs is to effect a redistribution of pupils among schools. Although school districts have the authority to assign pupils to specific public schools, not all of the pupils need attend as directed. In the early stages of desegregation in many districts, a simple boycott disrupted the intended attendance patterns. Usually organized for the purpose of keeping white children out of racially mixed schools or off the buses, boycotts and the agitation that often accompany them could induce such fear and concern among black

parents that minority as well as white enrollments were diminished. Under local compulsory attendance laws and with the continued high valuation by the public of universal education, boycotts have invariably been temporary phenomena. Their effectiveness, however temporary, suffices to demonstrate that a carefully devised desegregation plan can, upon implementation, result in a greatly diminished and still totally segregated pupil enrollment.

The transfer of pupils from public to private schooling is another constitutionally permissible form of white evasion of public school desegregation. Many hastily organized and poorly financed "segregation academies" have proved to be only somewhat less temporary than school boycotts. In a few school districts, with Memphis a leading example, large-scale private educational systems have persisted for several years. Previously existing parochial schools, especially in cities with a large Catholic population, have also received recruits from public schools. In some districts, with Boston a leading example, religious authorities have sought to avoid use of parochial schools as a haven for white flight from desegregation. In other districts new pupils have been welcomed, if only covertly, as the basis for overcoming problems associated with a steadily declining enrollment.

The most permanent type of white flight is movement to another school district. If the district undergoing desegregation is the central city of a metropolitan area, there may be many suburban districts that offer schooling with few or no minority pupils. Nearly all northern suburban districts and many southern suburban districts have an overwhelmingly white enrollment. Their schools are nearly uniracial even if the suburban district has implemented its own desegregation plan.

Residential mobility to escape undesirable effects of a desegregation plan may be possible within a city. A change of residence may permit a family's children to attend a nearby school or a racially unbalanced school, depending on the details of the plan and its completeness. In other situations, moving may be of little effectiveness as flight from desegregation. In Florida, for example, school districts are county-wide, most counties contain a sizable proportion of black pupils, and all counties have desegregation plans in operation.

A Cohort Perspective on Enrollment Changes

Most studies of white flight from school desegregation have taken as their index of white flight a measure of change in the enrollment of white pupils in public school systems.[5] The energy that has been put into assembling data and undertaking complex multivariate time-series analyses has not been matched by sufficient attention to the key variable. The change in white enrollment from one year to the next is a composite reflection of several types of change. In standard demographic parlance, it is a measure of "net" change rather than "gross" change. Use of net change glosses over the separate types of change and conceals information that would be revealed by appropriate specific measures.

To illustrate the limitation imposed by using net enrollment change as an index of white flight, consider any central city school district. Each year some families move to the city and some from the city, and some pupils transfer from public to private school or the reverse. Each year some pupils graduate from high school or drop out at an earlier stage, and others first enroll in kindergarten or first grade. Assume that this

normal flow of pupils into and out of the public schools amounts to 10% annual turnover in white pupils. Each year about 10% of the pupils from the previous year don't return and about 10% of the pupils are new to the system. Now assume that a desegregation program is begun, and that as a result of public controversy the supply of new white pupils dries up. No white parents moving to or within the metropolitan area locate so that they have to enroll their children in the desegregated system, and no five or six year olds enroll for the first time. Even if all of the pupils in the public school system comply fully with the desegregation action, there will be an annual percent decline in white enrollment. There is in this hypothetical situation a strong demographic response to school desegregation. To label that response white flight rather than white avoidance encourages a simplistic misidentification of the process.

Most studies of white flight have been sensitive to the problem of demonstrating that post-desegregation enrollment changes differ from predesegregation enrollment changes, but have overlooked the possibility of identifying separately any of the components of change. A diagram of the main linkages between desegregation actions and enrollment changes is given in Figure 1. A desegregation action can affect aggregate enrollment by its influence on migration or private school enrollment. (The diagram simplifies by omitting the possibility of an effect on dropout rates, on annexation to or from the school district, on the pattern of inter-district pupil changes, or on schools, grade spans, and special students included in the district enrollment count.) A change in pupil migration patterns may take several forms, as suggested in the hypothetical example of a district with a 10% turnover rate: (1) parents of currently

enrolled pupils may move to another district; (2) parents of pre-school children or potential parents may leave the district (note that parents may fit in categories (1) and (2) simultaneously); and (3) parents or potential parents who live in other districts and might have moved to the desegregated district may decide not to do so. An increase in enrollment in private schools may occur from: (1) an increased rate of transfer of pupils from public schools; (2) higher-than-expected rates of enrollment of new pupils in private rather than public schools; or (3) lower-than-expected rates of transfer of pupils from private to public schools.

The second set of three modes of desegregation action affecting enrollment patterns was couched in terms of higher or lower enrollments than expected; the first set could have been phrased in similar conditional terms. Each of the distinct enrollment effects occurs in the "normal" course of events in the absence of desegregation actions. To identify the causal effects suggested by Figure 1 requires a complex analysis of trends and the determinants of deviations from trends. Much enrollment change arises from causes other than desegregation actions. Unless these are well-specified and well-measured, there is a severe danger of over-interpretation of the impact of desegregation actions. The greater the reliance on aggregate measures of net change rather than on disaggregated or gross measures of specific components of change, the greater the interpretive difficulties.

Many of the analytic problems we have raised are not subject to resolution with the kinds of data generally available, nor are they all soluble within the techniques of contemporary social science. We shall return to these issues later, but first we wish to indicate that simple

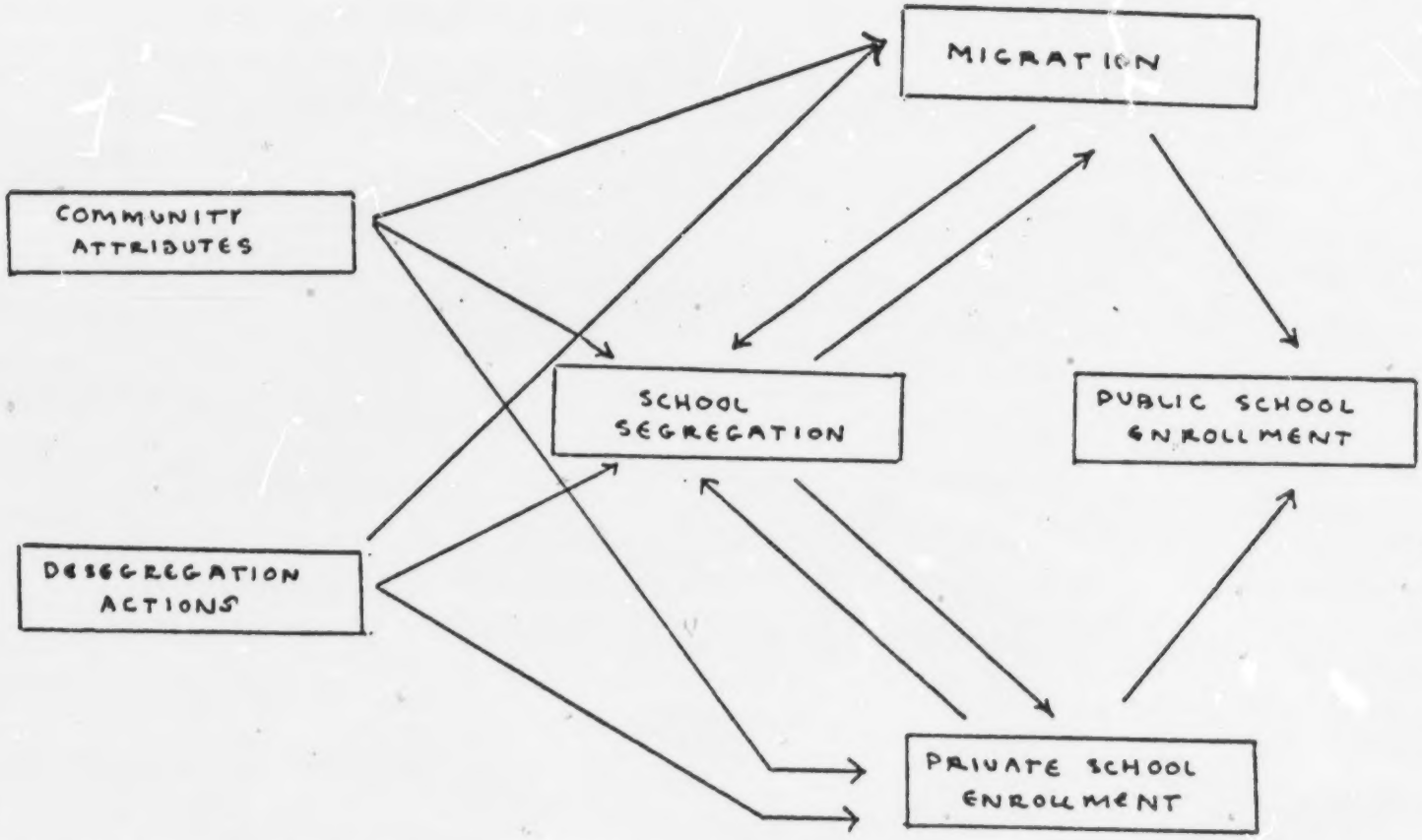

Figure 1. Model of School Enrollment Responses to Desegregation Actions

improvements in the measurement of enrollment change are feasible with data that often are available, and that these simple improvements may increase the interpretability of desegregation analyses.

The task of describing and assessing components of change in public school enrollment is formally similar to tasks routinely encountered in demographic studies of population change. Demographers have developed a variety of techniques for assessing components of change. One of the most powerful is cohort analysis. A cohort is a group of people defined on the basis of some common event during an initial period (for example, being born in year T). Cohort members are traced through succeeding years as they are exposed to the risk of sequential events (in the most elementary demographic example, the risk of death, which may be viewed as one form of departure from the initial population). The entrance of children into grade 1 of a public school district may be used as the defining-event for a cohort. In a school population unaffected by migration, failure, mortality, and other changes, the number of pupils in grade 2 in year T + 1 should equal the number initially observed in grade 1 in year T. In fact, of course, there will be additions to and subtractions from the initial cohort that alter the numbers observed year by year. And if our data source is enrollment data rather than longitudinal information on the schooling and residential experience of each individual child, then we cannot identify all of the components of change nor exploit the full potential of cohort analysis. But administratively gathered data do permit a partial cohort analysis that improves upon analysis of aggregate net enrollment change. We shall illustrate

the technique with published data from Annual Reports of the State Department of Education of Louisiana.

In Louisiana, public education is organized by parishes (counties). The East Baton Rouge Parish School District serves the population of the Baton Rouge metropolitan area (as defined at the time of the 1970 census). The Shreveport metropolitan area is served by the Bossier Parish and Caddo Parish School Districts, and we have combined data for these two parishes. Data for these school districts are displayed in Tables 1 and 2. Each of these districts implemented a partial desegregation program in Fall, 1970.

In Table 1, selected enrollment data for the years 1968 to 1975 in the East Baton Rouge Parish School District are organized to permit tracing the enrollment history of cohorts. The cohorts are identified by the year in which the pupils who progressed normally entered 1st grade. The first row of the table refers to the cohort of white pupils that entered 1st grade in Fall, 1961. We first observe them in this data set in Fall, 1968, when they are in 8th grade. They numbered 3,319 when the official enrollment count was made. In Fall, 1969, the official enrollment count of white 9th grades was 3.9% greater. The 10th grade count, in Fall, 1970 (upon implementation of the partial desegregation plan) was 5.5% lower than the year before. Between 10th and 11th grades, this cohort experienced a net loss of 8.9% of its members. Throughout the table, the first entry for each row shows the size of the cohort of white pupils when it first appears in this data set, and subsequent entries in each row show the percentage change in enrollment from the previous year.

The principal question for which these data were assembled is whether grade by grade changes in white public school enrollment are associated

Table 1

Initial Public School Enrollment and Annual Percent Change, for Selected Cohorts of White Pupils, East Baton Rouge Parish School District: Fall, 1968 to Fall, 1975.

Cohort	and Grade[1]	1968	1969	1970[2]	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
1961	8th	3319	3.9	- 5.5	- 8.9	- 2.5			
1962	7th	3678	- 2.0	- 4.3	- 0.9	-11.8	- 0.4		
1963	6th	3549	6.9	- 9.2	4.9	2.8	-10.1	-18.6	
1964	5th	3362	1.6	- 0.6	- 1.6	- 0.1	0.1	-16.1	3.3
1965	4th	3623	0.6	- 6.3	3.9	- 1.9	2.4	- 5.7	- 1.5
1966	3rd	3625	0.8	- 7.7	3.3	- 3.2	0.1	5.9	7.0
1967	2nd	3680	- 0.9	- 5.4	- 0.3	0.2	7.6	7.9	7.2
1968	1st	3734	- 1.7	- 6.4	0.8	- 2.3	1.6	- 4.4	18.7
1969	1st		3650	-10.2	1.3	0.3	2.1	- 4.5	9.5
1970	1st			3410	- 1.3	- 0.7	2.0	- 7.2	6.4
1971	1st				2947	- 0.2	1.9	- 7.5	8.7
1972	1st					2931	1.9	- 8.6	8.1
1973	1st						3111	- 8.4	8.4
1974	1st							2988	9.5

[1]Cohorts are identified by year (Fall) that most entered 1st grade. Grade identified is that at time of first observation in this data set (Fall, 1968 or later).

[2]A large-scale pupil desegregation plan was implemented in Fall, 1970.

Source: Annual Reports of the State Department of Education of Louisiana.

with the implementation of a desegregation program. In Table 1 and in Table 2 the entries in the 1970 column are uniformly negative and are among the largest negative percentages in each row. Each cohort experienced a large loss in the year of desegregation.

Another question raised in the white flight literature is whether an apparent first year white enrollment loss is matched by unusually high losses for several succeeding years, whether the pattern for subsequent years returns to "normal," or whether there is a drift back to public schools of some of those who left the first year. Examination of experience in the years after 1970 shows an erratic pattern of gains and losses for the East Baton Rouge cohorts, and an inconsistent pattern of small declines for the Bossier/Caddo cohorts.

The data in Tables 1 and 2 provide other opportunities for browsing to discern patterns in enrollment trends. In both tables there are substantial enrollment declines associated with the transition from the 10th to 11th grades; perhaps this reflects dropouts of children exceeding compulsory attendance ages. The numbers at the bottom of each column show the size of the successive cohorts entering 1st grade. These numbers display a general downward trend. We cannot determine from these data how much of this downward trend is accounted for by previous fertility declines and the consequent annual declines in the number of children in each parish reaching age 6, how much stems from increasing utilization of private schooling, and how much reflects migration patterns of families with young children.

Annual counts of enrollment by grade are often produced and used in educational administration. Standard computer programs have been prepared

Table 2

Initial Public School Enrollment and Annual Percent Change, for Selected Cohorts of White Pupils, Bossier and Caddo Parish School Districts (combined): Fall, 1968 to Fall, 1975.

Cohort and Grade[1]		1968	1969	1970[2]	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975
1961	8th	3944	- 1.6	- 6.9	- 9.8	- 8.1			
1962	7th	4069	- 3.3	- 5.3	- 4.2	- 6.9	- 9.5		
1963	6th	4127	- 1.1	- 9.9	2.7	- 3.8	- 7.4	- 7.6	
1964	5th	4064	- 2.7	- 6.4	- 3.3	7.1	- 6.8	- 7.2	- 9.5
1965	4th	4232	- 4.2	- 6.6	- 5.0	1.4	3.4	- 3.2	- 8.2
1966	3rd	4305	- 4.9	- 9.4	- 3.3	0.4	- 2.5	5.6	- 3.0
1967	2nd	4207	- 4.0	-10.1	- 3.2	- 0.4	- 0.3	- 1.2	7.8
1968	1st	4580	- 9.1	-11.1	- 2.9	- 2.0	- 2.0	- 1.6	- 0.7
1969	1st		4284	-12.6	- 3.6	- 1.4	- 4.5	1.6	- 1.7
1970	1st			3525	- 4.8	- 1.8	- 4.0	0.2	- 0.6
1971	1st				3026	- 3.0	- 3.6	0.7	- 3.4
1972	1st					2725	2.0	1.7	- 3.5
1973	1st						2590	0.4	0.0
1974	1st							2780	- 2.8

[1]Cohorts are identified by year (Fall) that most entered 1st grade. Grade identified is that at time of first observation in this data set (Fall, 1968 or later).

[2]A large-scale pupil desegregation plan was implemented in Fall, 1970.

Source: Annual Reports of the State Department of Education of Louisiana.

to permit use of such data in projecting future enrollments.[6] It is common experience that these numbers and the associated grade-to-grade transition rates fluctuate in erratic patterns. One expert recommends using a ten year trend to establish a base from which to make a projection.[7] Clearly the task of establishing "normal" trends from which to identify deviations attributable to school desegregation actions is extraordinarily difficult. If it is assumed that parental flight responses may occur during the period that desegregation is a controversial issue before any action has been taken, at the time of actions, and for some years following, identification of effects would require extraordinarily rich data sources and ingenious and meticulous statistical methodology.[8]

Flight to Where

If pupils flee from public schools in a desegregating district, they must alight in some other school system. One way to work the puzzle of interpreting complex enrollment trends in the desegregating district is to find evidence of complementary enrollment trends in private schools or adjoining districts. Of course, it is not necessarily any easier to identify unusual enrollment increases in suburban districts than it is to identify unusual enrollment declines in a central city district. Indeed, for those central city districts in which the number of white public school pupils declined greatly before desegregation, use of enrollment data to identify destinations of fleers may be much harder. A 10% decline in public school whites in the central district may represent only a 2 or 3% rise in public school whites in suburban districts. If the suburban

territory is divided into many small school districts, the enrollment in each may be too small and trends too erratic for reliable interpretation.

To illustrate the utility of pairing outflow with inflow data, we may use the Louisiana districts. Because these are metropolitan districts, the principal destination of white fleers from public schools must have been private schools. (Unfortunately for our example, each of these metropolitan areas has been expanding into adjoining parishes, and the formal definitions of the Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas have been altered since 1970 to include additional parishes. To keep our example simple, we ignore this real-world complication.)

Annual data on private school enrollments, by race and grade, are provided in the Annual Reports of the State Department of Education of Louisiana. To permit a summary comparison of public and private enrollment trends, without sacrificing all of the benefits of the cohort approach, we have summed together data for five cohorts, those that were in 1st through 5th grade in Fall, 1968 (7th through 11th grades in Fall, 1975). Public and private school totals are arrayed side by side in Table 3. The first pair of data columns shows the aggregate enrollment in the five-grade span for each year, 1968 to 1974. The middle columns present the annual numerical changes in enrollment, and the final columns present the change figures as percentages.

During the years 1968-1975 public school enrollments (for these cohorts) were generally declining. Private school enrollments increased to a peak in 1970 and subsequently declined. We must examine the middle columns for evidence of complementarity in public and private enrollment trends. The most striking result is the change accompanying the partial

Table 3

Annual Change in Enrollment of Selected Cohorts of White Pupils in Public and Private Schools, East Baton Rouge Parish and Bossier and Caddo Parishes (combined): Fall, 1968 to Fall, 1975[1]

School Year (Fall)	Initial Enrollment		Changes in Enrollment			
			Number		Percent	
	Public	Private	Public	Private	Public	Private
			East Baton Rouge Parish			
1968 to 1969	18,024	4,581	14	- 135	0.1	- 2.9
1969 to 1970	18,038	4,446	- 969	459	-5.4	10.3
1970 to 1971	17,069	4,905	254	- 378	1.5	- 7.7
1971 to 1972	17,323	4,527	- 14	- 242	-0.1	- 5.3
1972 to 1973	17,309	4,285	434	- 379	2.5	- 8.8
1973 to 1974	17,743	3,906	-1,382	- 638	-7.8	-16.3
1974 to 1975	16,361	3,268	808	107	4.9	3.3
			Bossier and Caddo Parishes			
1968 to 1969	21,38[illegible]	1,205	-1,084	1,008	-5.1	83.7
1969 to 1970	20,30[illegible]	2,213	-1,879	1,822	-9.3	82.3
1970 to 1971	18,425	4,035	- 749	- 71	-4.1	- 1.8
1971 to 1972	17,676	3,964	251	- 378	1.4	- 9.5
1972 to 1973	17,927	3,586	- 341	124	-1.9	3.5
1973 to 1974	17,586	3,710	- 309	- 411	-1.8	-11.1
1974 to 1975	17,277	3,299	- 568	- 427	-3.3	-12.9

[1]Enrollment figures for all years are for those cohorts present in 1st through 5th grade in Fall, 1968 (identified in Tables 1 and 2 as the 1964 through 1968 cohorts).

Source: Annual Reports of the State Department of Education of Louisiana.

desegregation in Bossier/Caddo 1969 to 1970. Public enrollment for our cohorts declined by 1,879 and private enrollment increased by 1,822. The prima facie case for a significant white flight to private schools couldn't be stronger. But there is more than just this one piece of evidence, and the other pieces do not fit so easily into a white flight interpretation. The year prior to desegregation in Bossier/Caddo also reveals a matched transfer from public to private schooling, of a large magnitude. The second year after desegregation there is an increase in public enrollment and a somewhat greater decrease in private enrollment. Is this evidence of a return to the public system once desegregation is implemented successfully? No other year shows such a pattern, and the last two annual observations reveal declining enrollments in both public and private schools.

The data in Table 3 for East Baton Rouge contain evidence of a public-to-private transfer upon implementation of desegregation and a subsequent return movement, but again there is much other evidence not so readily interpreted. The public school loss with desegregation is twice the size of the private school gain. The subsequent pattern of return from private to public schooling shows up in the first and third years after desegregation, but not in the second year.

In East Baton Rouge Parish, 20% of white pupils in these cohorts attended private schools in Fall, 1968. This increased to 22% with desegregation, but had dropped back to 17% by 1974 (a drop that may reflect a general tendency to utilize private schooling more during the early grades when children are younger and costs are lower). In Bossier/Caddo Parishes, only 5% of white pupils in these cohorts attended private schools

in Fall, 1968, and this increased in two years to 18%. By 1974 this had dropped only to 16%.

Enrollment data collected by governmental agencies cannot be expected to provide complete information on where parents flee to when desegregation occurs. Longitudinal data for individual pupils seem, in principle, to be needed. Such data are difficult and expensive to collect, and the only extant body of repeated interviews of parents in a district undergoing desegregation is the Boston study.[9] Alas, even this massive body of data has proven intractable to simple analysis of white flight, and no unambiguous findings have yet been reported.

Identifiability of Desegregation Effects

During the Dallas desegregation remedy hearings, a sociologist testified about the ambiguities in the evidence for desegregation-induced white flight. During the morning recess he was corralled by two persons who presented themselves as living proof that white flight exists. In a search for other living proof, we present in Tables 4 and 5 sample survey data on the "main reason" given by white heads of households with school-age children for moving from the central city to elsewhere in the metropolitan area. These data are from the Annual Housing Survey, a recently inaugurated innovative program sponsored by the Department of Housing and Urban Development and conducted by the Bureau of the Census. Each year a subset of the nation's largest metropolitan areas is oversampled so that data for those individual areas can be reported in addition to national estimates.

Results for the metropolitan areas included in the 1975 and 1976 surveys are presented in Tables 4 and 5. In each year, the interviewer

was instructed to write all reasons mentioned and to mark the main reason. Reasons were subsequently coded into a specific set of about 30 categories, which we have collapsed into the groupings shown in the column headings. There was one change in coding of particular interest to us. In 1975, "neighborhood" was a single category, while in 1976 it was subdivided into "neighborhood overcrowded," "change in racial or ethnic composition of neighborhood," and "wanted better neighborhood." In both years, "schools" was a single coding category.

Housing considerations--needed larger house or apartment, wanted to own or rent, wanted better house, wanted residence with more conveniences, etc.--dominate as the main reason for a suburban move. Family reasons--change in marital status, change in size of family, wanted own household, moved to be closer to relatives--were cited frequently in many metropolitan areas. Employment reasons include job transfer or change and commuting reasons. The "other" category in the tables includes displacement by urban renewal, highway construction, fire, or disaster, along with a few miscellaneous categories.

The reasons of principal interest in the study of white flight from desegregation are "schools" and "neighborhood." The percentage of families indicating schools as the main reason for moving to the suburbs is small, ranging from zero for 12 of the 27 places to above 10% for only two. Both Fort Worth and San Francisco have school desegregation programs, with a major implementation occurring one year and four years prior to the housing survey, respectively. Even in Boston with its history of bitter and sustained public controversy over desegregation, schools are cited as the main reason for moving by only 6% of white families who moved to the suburbs.

Table 4

Percentage Giving Each Main Reason for Moving from the Central City to the Suburbs, White Households with School Age Children, Selected Metropolitan Areas: 1974 to 1975

Metropolitan Area	Employment	Family	Housing	Neighborhood	Schools	Other
Minneapolis-St. Paul	8.7	9.1	36.5	0.0	0.0	45.7
Newark	0.0	13.6	43.2	26.8	0.0	16.4
Phoenix	28.6	0.0	29.1	14.5	0.0	27.8
Pittsburgh	13.4	13.1	33.3	6.4	7.2	26.6
Boston	0.0	17.3	41.4	23.2	5.7	12.4
Detroit	22.7	8.7	36.4	23.3	4.3	4.6
Anaheim	8.2	8.1	39.9	15.9	7.8	20.1
Albany	0.0	4.9	50.0	24.4	4.9	15.8
Dallas	24.1	11.2	32.2	0.0	3.7	28.8
Fort Worth	14.9	6.5	32.3	18.8	15.3	12.2
Los Angeles	0.0	13.7	34.0	19.4	6.3	26.6
Washington	13.1	25.6	49.6	0.0	0.0	11.7

Note: Each row sums to 100 percent.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Annual Housing Survey for Metropolitan Areas, 1974/75.

Table 5

Percentage Giving Each Main Reason for Moving from the Central City to the Suburbs, White Households with School Age Children, Selected Metropolitan Areas: 1975 to 1976

Metropolitan Area	Employment	Family	Housing	Neighborhood	Neighborhood Racial Change	Schools	Other
Atlanta	11.5	4.5	56.8	6.8	2.2	0.0	18.2
Chicago	7.5	14.6	26.8	10.7	14.7	3.6	22.1
Philadelphia	0.0	36.9	36.9	8.9	0.0	8.6	8.7
San Francisco	0.0	10.8	22.5	45.1	0.0	10.6	11.0
Paterson	0.0	49.8	50.2	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Rochester, NY	0.0	15.6	54.7	11.1	3.7	3.6	11.3
Miami	7.0	30.6	28.0	3.4	3.2	0.0	27.8
Cincinnati	9.1	36.3	32.3	4.6	4.7	0.0	13.0
Columbus, OH	22.5	30.1	34.7	4.3	0.0	4.1	4.3
Milwaukee	5.9	12.2	37.7	18.4	0.0	0.0	25.8
New Orleans	6.6	24.0	31.7	0.0	6.6	6.2	24.9
Kansas City	0.0	13.1	62.7	0.0	0.0	0.0	24.2
San Bernardino	14.5	4.5	47.7	9.0	0.0	0.0	24.3
San Diego	6.8	0.0	40.2	26.7	0.0	0.0	26.3
Portland, OR	5.3	7.3	43.7	10.1	0.0	4.9	28.7

Note: Each row sums to 100 percent.

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census, Annual Housing Survey for Metropolitan Areas, 1975/76.

Perhaps white parents are reluctant to cite schools because that might tend to identify them as prejudiced. Judging from the public controversy in many cities, and from the national turmoil over busing, we would expect "schools" to be regarded by most whites as a legitimate and respectable answer. In the 1976 survey, neighborhood racial change was singled out as a separate category; it was cited by 15% of Chicago area movers (Chicago did not yet have a desegregation plan) and a much lower percentage of families in five other places. Wanting a "better neighborhood" may entail racial considerations, even if unspoken. Neighborhood reasons are relatively common for some metropolitan areas and infrequent for others. Unfortunately for simple interpretation, the search for better neighborhoods has been a motivating force for suburbanization for many decades, and hence cannot be regarded with any confidence as an indicator of racial concerns. To the extent that racial concerns are subsumed in broader reasons such as wanting a better neighborhood or better house, the racial considerations may reflect white flight from black neighbors--a process that has also been an active suburbanizing force for many decades--rather than a direct or immediate concern with school desegregation. Indeed, the opinion that suburban schools are better than city schools predates the controversy over desegregation.

Surveys designed more specifically to tap sentiments toward school desegregation could provide better information for our purposes than is available from the Annual Housing Survey. Even if such data were available, the analyst would be faced with a difficult task of inferring motivation. There are many reasons for moving to the suburbs and each family may have a mixture of motives. In this sense the behavior of most

families is "overdetermined." If a concern with desegregation is identified as one reason among a larger set of reasons, how is it possible to specify whether it is one more straw on the pile or the straw that broke the back of residential inertia? Self perceptions of motivation and public opinion polling on reactions to school desegregation are informative, but they do not provide a simple solution to the task of identifying desegregation effects.

Any specific effects of desegregation actions taken by a school district on migration patterns within, to, or from that district, occur in a context of many other political, social, economic, and psychological forces. National concern over white suburbanization and black ghettoization predates the recent decade of controversy over urban school desegregation, and the scholarly literature on the causes of these residential transformations is enormously rich and complex. Trends in public and private school enrollment have also been analyzed, incorporating such causes as trends in the birth rate, city-suburb and white-black differentials in fertility, the changing role of parochial education and of Catholicism in American life, the declining availability of nuns as teachers, educational finance, increasing educational attainment of parents, changing parental perspectives on the constituents of quality education, and many more.

To identify a specific impact of desegregation actions on public and private school enrollment and on the residential distribution of racial groups, we must be able to demonstrate either (1) that the changes in these variables could not have occurred as they did in the absence of desegregation actions, or (2) that some temporal or spatial variation in

these processes can be attributed statistically to variations in desegregation actions. The first alternative can be dismissed, for racial enrollment and residential patterns clearly can and do change enormously in the absence of desegregation actions. Thus the task of identifying the impacts of desegregation actions requires sophisticated multivariate analysis.

If the effects of a desegregation action are direct and large, it should be feasible to disentangle their influence from the milieu of other forces. David Armor's recent work purports to demonstrate such a consistent pattern of massive white flight (when there is extensive mandatory busing in large districts with substantial minority populations and developed suburbs to accommodate residential flight) that no entanglement of other forces could possibly account for the results.[10] Gary Orfield's conclusion is similar to ours, that "to firmly establish any argument about white flight one would need some kind of general theory of urban racial change...."[11]

Most studies of white flight, even when they have incorporated some kind of multivariate model, have been ineffective in controlling for the full range of known factors that should form part of a general theory of urban racial change.[12] Consider the two most noteworthy published studies. Coleman, Kelly, and Moore estimated equations in which changes in white public school enrollment were evaluated as a function of change in school segregation, number of pupils in the district, proportion black, segregation between districts in the metropolitan area, region, and certain interaction terms.[13] Farley added variables reflecting the metropolitan residential structure (city/suburb housing ratio, percentage of homes built before 1940,

population density) and economic structure (white unemployment rate).[14] Neither study included measures of the administrative structure of school districts, the fiscal situation of municipalities and school districts, social and physical characteristics such as crime rates, fire and bond ratings, history of racial disturbances, and other such components of a general theory of urban racial change. In both studies the variable to be explained was aggregate net change in white public school enrollment, and desegregation action was characterized by a single measure (decline in the value of a segregation index). Orfield's mandate has not yet been fulfilled.

A Policy Research Agenda

Much social science research on contemporary society can be regarded to some degree as policy analysis. Narrowly focussed evaluation research obviously seeks to influence policy choice, but even general social research is often carried out in the hope that better understanding of social change will enhance the design and implementation of social policy. In the case of school desegregation and white flight, neither is prime cause or consequence of the other. There are many reasons for undertaking school desegregation, and white flight is but one of many outcomes in need of assessment. There are many facets to white flight, and each has a number of causes. Many of these are the direct or indirect consequence of governmental policies of diverse sorts beyond the explicitly educational. As students of urban racial patterns in migration, housing consumption, residential location, and schooling, we can design an array of further studies of the demographic impacts of school desegregation. Some of

these would be considered policy analysis only to the extent that they help set a realistic social context for the policy discussion, whereas others respond more directly to questions that legislators, judges, school board members, and citizens think need answering. We shall describe a few prospective studies to illustrate the range of types of policy relevance.

What is the response of white families to the presence of minority pupils in communities that have not implemented desegregation programs? The literature on residential succession abounds with instances of neighborhood racial turnover.[15] How are residential change and school change linked in this process? Can annual racial enrollment data provide a richer data resource for neighborhood turnover studies than is available from decennial census data? Is there anything distinctive about the presumed white flight from desegregation that is not already embraced in the white avoidance of "changing" neighborhoods and schools? Why should a concern with white flight lead to a policy focus on school desegregation rather than on racial functioning of the metropolitan housing market, economic shifts between cities and suburbs, and the like?

Somewhat less far-reaching would be studies differentiating the private school and migration components of white flight. Moving one's children to private schools is much less permanent than moving one's family to the suburbs, and does not entail the same range of fiscal and residential impacts on the city. Further knowledge is needed of the circumstances under which existing or new private school systems serve as havens, and of the circumstances that are conducive to a return to public schooling.

The white population has been treated throughout our discussion as an undifferentiated aggregate. The socioeconomic differentiation within the white population is of great concern in the assessment of policy implications. Socioeconomic selectivity in private school enrollment and residential relocation is to be expected, yet has been ignored in most studies.[16] The socioeconomic selectivity of the response bears on the degree of conflict between seemingly independent federal policies. Urban development policy is concerned with attracting and retaining middle class persons as central city residents, with the avowed aim to alleviate the fiscal crisis of the cities and to reduce the city/suburb racial separation. To what extent is the federal effort to improve the education of city residents through desegregation working at cross-purposes with other urban policy goals? Within the domain of education, what are the potential conflicts in methods and aims between (1) desegregation actions that seek to disperse pupils according to race, (2) educational assistance programs aimed at schools with concentrations of disadvantaged children, and (3) programs designed to meet the special needs of non-English-speaking children and others of minority ethnic identification?

The attempt to use studies of white flight as a specific basis for changing public policy on school desegregation reached a peak in 1975 with extensive press coverage given to statements by James S. Coleman. There has been controversy over the methodology of the study conducted by Coleman and his colleagues, but let us ignore shortcomings of the research and consider two of his summary conclusions:[17]

> The effect of desegregation on white loss has been widely different among different cities where desegregation has taken place.

> Because, insofar as we can estimate, the loss of whites upon desegregation is a one-time loss, the long-term impact of desegregation is considerably less than that of other continuing factors. The continuing white losses produce an extensive erosion of the interracial contact that desegregation of city schools brings about.

The second of these conclusions might have been used as the rationale for the undertaking of broader-based research of the type we have presented and proposed. The import of this conclusion was largely overlooked in the effort to reach immediate specific policy conclusions regarding school desegregation.

The first of these conclusions is even more intriguing, for it has also been largely overlooked but pertains directly to the information needed for appropriate policy modification. The most immediately pertinent policy research on demographic impacts of school desegregation actions would be identification of the sources of differentials in the impacts. Of particular interest is whether the character of the desegregating agent (court, HEW, state, school district) or of the desegregation action affects the demographic impact. Katzman's review of a few case studies suggests that these policy choices do not affect the outcome,[18] but Armor's previously cited report suggests that the agent and the action are of fundamental import.[19] If it could be demonstrated that some controllable features of the desegregation process had a significant effect on the demographic impact--for example, the number of schools affected, the speed of implementation, the specific techniques used, the character of community education about the plan, reliance on court order or other federal pressure--then educational administrators could better plan to desegregate and avoid or minimize white flight.

Press coverage of Coleman's research and even subsequent scholarly research focussed on the findings of an average effect of school desegregation on white enrollment. No judge, superintendent, or school board really cares much about average effects. They seek to discern what choices within their power can make the outcome of their actions more favorable. If social research is to aid in resolving America's continuing racial dilemma, its protagonists should seek to increase the stock of information about the effects of alternative policy choices. Otherwise the battles of the sociologists will continue to be dismissed in favor of personal intuition.

NOTES

[1]One of us (K.T.) testified as an expert witness for the plaintiffs.

[2]Tasby v. Estes, 416 F. Supp. 644, 1976.

[3]See, for example, Charles T. Clotfelter, "School Desegregation, 'Tipping,' and Private School Enrollment," The Journal of Human Resources. 11 (December, 1975), pp. 28-50.

James S. Coleman, Sara D. Kelly, John A. Moore, Trends in School Segregation, 1968-73, (Washington, DC: Urban Institute Paper 722-03-01, 1975).

Michael W. Giles, Everett F. Cataldo, Douglas S. Gatlin, "White Flight and Percent Black: The Tipping Point Re-examined." Social Science Quarterly, 56 (June, 1975), pp. 85-92.

Reynolds Farley, "Can Governmental Policies Integrate Public Schools?" Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association (New York City: September 1, 1976).

Thomas F. Pettigrew and Robert L. Green, "School Desegregation in Large Cities: A Critique of the Coleman 'White Flight' Thesis," Harvard Educational Review, 46 (February, 1976), pp. 1-53.

David J. Armor, "Declaration of David J. Armor," Carlin et al. vs. San Diego Board of Education (San Diego, 1977).

Martin T. Katzman, The Quality of Municipal Services, Central City Decline, and Middle Class Flight (Boston: Department of City and Regional Planning, Harvard University, 1977).

[4]Brown v. Board of Education, 349 U.S. 294.

[5]Coleman, Kelly, and Moore, op. cit.

Christine Rossell, "School Desegregation and White Flight," Political Science Quarterly, 90 (Winter, 1975/76), pp. 675-695.

Armor, op. cit.

[6]Donald N. McIsaac, Dennis W. Spuck, and Lyle Hunter, "Enrollment Projections: ENROLV2," Department of Educational Administration, University of Wisconsin, September 1972.

[7]Cited in McIsaac, Spuck, and Hunter, op. cit.

[8]Armor, op. cit.

[9]J. Michael Ross, "Changes in Public Preference for Alternative School Desegregation Policies: Theoretical Formulations." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, 1976.
See also D. Garth Taylor and Arthur L. Stinchcombe, The Boston School Desegregation Controversy, Draft Report (Chicago: National Opinion Research Center, 1977).

[10]Armor, op. cit.

[11]Gary Orfield, "White Flight Research: Its Importance, Perplexities and Possible Policy Implications." Symposium on School Desegregation and White Flight (Notre Dame, Ind: Center for Civil Rights, 1975), pp. 48-49.

[12]Katzman, op. cit.

[13]Coleman, Kelly, and Moore, op. cit.

[14]Farley, op. cit.

[15]Howard Aldrich, "Ecological Succession in Racially Changing Neighborhoods, A Review of the Literature." Urban Affairs Quarterly, 10 (March, 1975), pp. 327-348.

[16]A study reported by Giles, Gatlin, and Cataldo does deal with the class issue as it relates to forms of protest against school desegregation. Michael W. Giles, Douglas S. Gatlin, and Everett F. Cataldo, "Racial and Class Prejudice: Their Relative Effects on Protest against School Desegregation." American Sociological Review, 41 (April, 1976), pp. 280-288.

[17]Coleman, Kelly, and Moore, op. cit., p. 79.

[18]Katzman, op. cit., chapter 3, p. 28.

[19]Armor, op. cit.